

Comment on the Belmont Hill School Proposal

Belmont Planning Board Public Meeting
January 10, 2023

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The key question is

How big of a lot does the school **need for its educational purposes?**

what the school is asking for



what the school needs for educational purposes

Settling this number is the key to compromise

educational needs of school



VS

concerns of the town

- pollution • noise • fuel tanks
- traffic • wildlife • sustainability
- wetlands • trees • good neighbors
- abutters • safety • climate change

The primary goal of the Planning Board is to protect and preserve the character and the quality of life that defines Belmont.

How many new spaces does the school need?

- A. Daily use
- B. Overflow parking for events
- C. Once-a-year events (homecoming, graduation, etc.)
- D. Future use

A. Daily use

Proposal, page 28:

Under current conditions (2022) school is short 29 spaces to accommodate all staff/faculty on same day,

Kelly Durfee Cordoza slides from 12/6/22

Parking Demand Based on Existing Use

- Short 29 spaces to accommodate all employees and students with parking stickers at same time - this is after having 32 students park at the satellite lot

Actually, it's with zero students in satellite lot
With satellite lot, they have **21 extra spaces now**

$$\overbrace{29}^{\text{need}} = \underbrace{(277)}_{\substack{\text{\# parking permits} \\ \text{for students + staff}}} - \underbrace{(268 - 7 - 13)}_{\substack{\text{\# spots on campus} \\ \text{not including accessible and visitor spots}}}$$

What is their net gain?

page 28 of proposal

Table 5: Parking at Marsh Street and East Campus				
Lot	Existing Condition (2022)	Existing # Spaces	Proposed # Spaces	Change
Marsh Street: Jordan Athletic Center	Unpaved gravel lot without lines. Access from Marsh Street, faculty/staff	12	26	14
Marsh Street: Upper Lot	Faculty/visitors	35	18	-17
Off Site (Church) Lot	Rented lot in Arlington served by shuttle bus, students	50	0	-
Park Avenue: East Campus Lot	N/A	0	143	143
Prospect Street: Facilities Lot	N/a	0	10	10
NET INCREASE				150

Arlington lot not relevant for net

150 car lot
(what they are asking for)

29 car lot
(educational need
as stated in proposal)



Daily Parking – Future Condition (Campus Wide)

Only 142 student permits

- inconsistent
- ~~Eliminate satellite parking and bring all students to main campus~~ – 160 spaces
 - 153 Employee spaces
 - 19 Visitor Spaces
 - 14 Accessible Spaces (Per Code)
 - 26 Overflow/Future Spaces

traffic impact assessment p. 18

135 employee spaces

Code is 9 accessible spaces

for future removal of maintenance lot
for dining hall?

Total = 372

On campus: – 268

new lot need = 104 spaces

The actual numbers are

- **277 student + staff spaces (= # permits)** – 36 lower than 153+160=313
- 19 visitor spaces
- 9 Accessible Spaces (Per Code)
- 26 Overflow/Future spaces

Total = 331

On campus: – 268

new lot need = 63 spaces

Includes **full wishlist**
for visitors and future use (+45)

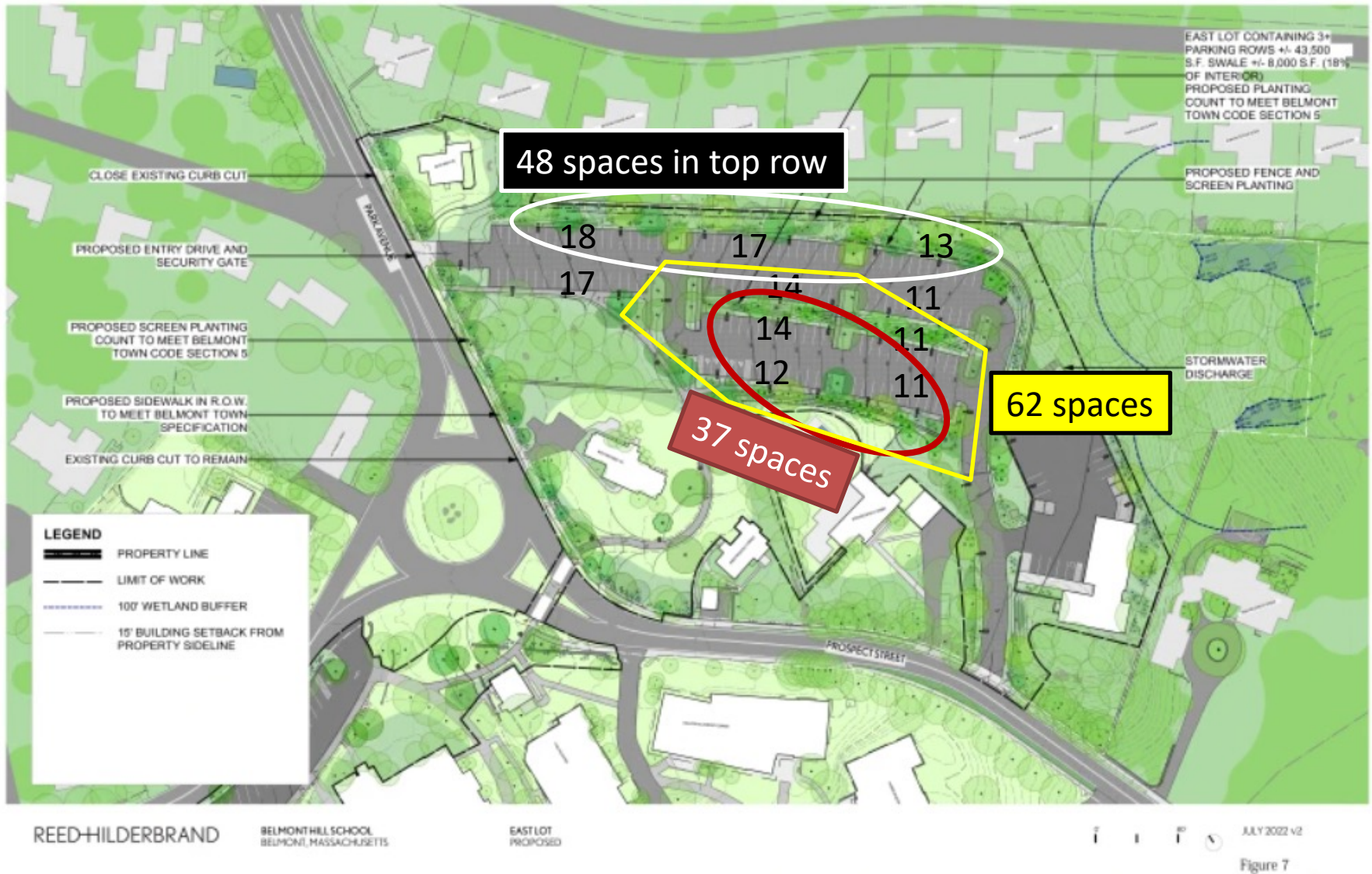
150 car lot
(what they are asking for)

63 car lot
includes wishlist
for visitors/future use

29 car lot
(educational need
stated in proposal)



Could easily eliminate 2/3 of the lot and still meet their educational needs

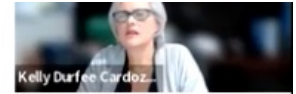


~~Revised plan based on neighbor input~~

B. Overflow use

Kelly Cordoza's slides from 12/6/22

Parking Needs



Event Parking – Existing Condition (TYPICAL)

2018-2019 – pre COVID Police Details – 69 days in school year and 121 details

- Athletic Events – 4:00 PM, Students, Employees, Visiting Teams and Families
- Back to School Night – Employees and Families of 464 boys (after work 2 cars)
- Homecoming – Prospective Students, Student Athletes, Students, Visiting Teams, Families and Alumni

10/26/22 – 86% of parkign used at 4:30, 5 soccer games, cross country and JV football



Even with 7 games going on simultaneously lots are only 86% full

B. Overflow use

Why do parents need to park off-street for games?

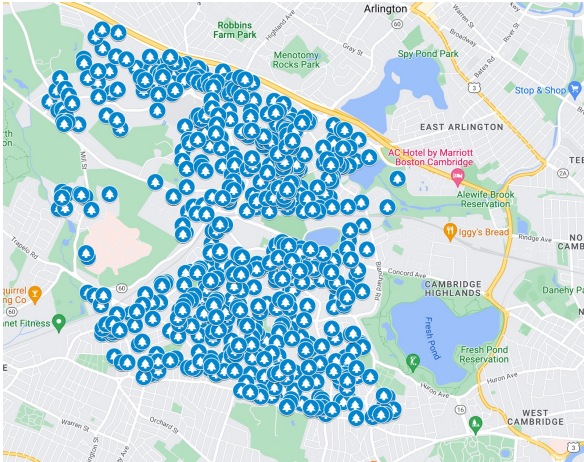
- School has never even asked for this.
- No justification/educational use mentioned in any of the submitted materials.

School has given two justifications for overflow parking in discussions

1. neighbors do not want on-street parking for events
2. neighbors complain to police about on-street parking

What do the neighbors want?

Stop the Belmont Hill School from destroying Belmont's woods
www.change.org/belmontwild



2,477 have signed. Let's get to 2,500!



At 2,500 signatures, this petition is more likely to get picked up by **local news!**



Heather Krafian signed 1 hour ago



Lisa Sedrakian signed 2 hours ago



Stop Belmont Hill School

 **Share on Facebook**

2500 neighbors say:
“park on our streets”
“reduce the footprint of this project”

Are neighbors complaining?

- We asked **Belmont Police Chief MacIssac** about neighbor complaints:



he said:

*“Please understand the **majority of complaints** we are talking about **originated more than ten to fifteen years ago.**”*

There are workable solutions to improve on-street parking

- Remove “no parking” from Marsh street
 - Room to increase shoulder if needed
- Communication about where to park on streets 5 minutes from campus (e.g. Rutledge)
- It’s perfectly reasonable for parents to walk 5 minutes to a game



How much on-street parking can they live with?

- Chief MacIsaac estimated 29-75 for average overflow.
 - Very rough guess/estimate, based on “lengths of roadways” and “average vehicle length 14.7 feet”
 - Goal is not to reduce this to zero
- School has not provided its own statement or data about on-street usage and need
- Would 29 off-street with the rest on-street be ok with the school?
 - It's ok with the neighbors
 - We need a clear statement about acceptable on-street numbers
 - not based on what “neighbors” want
 - not based on what the town or the police want
 - based only on educational needs of the school

C. Special event use

- Graduation, homecoming, back-to-school night
- There is no way to justify building an enormous lot for events a few times a year
- We shouldn't even be discussing this

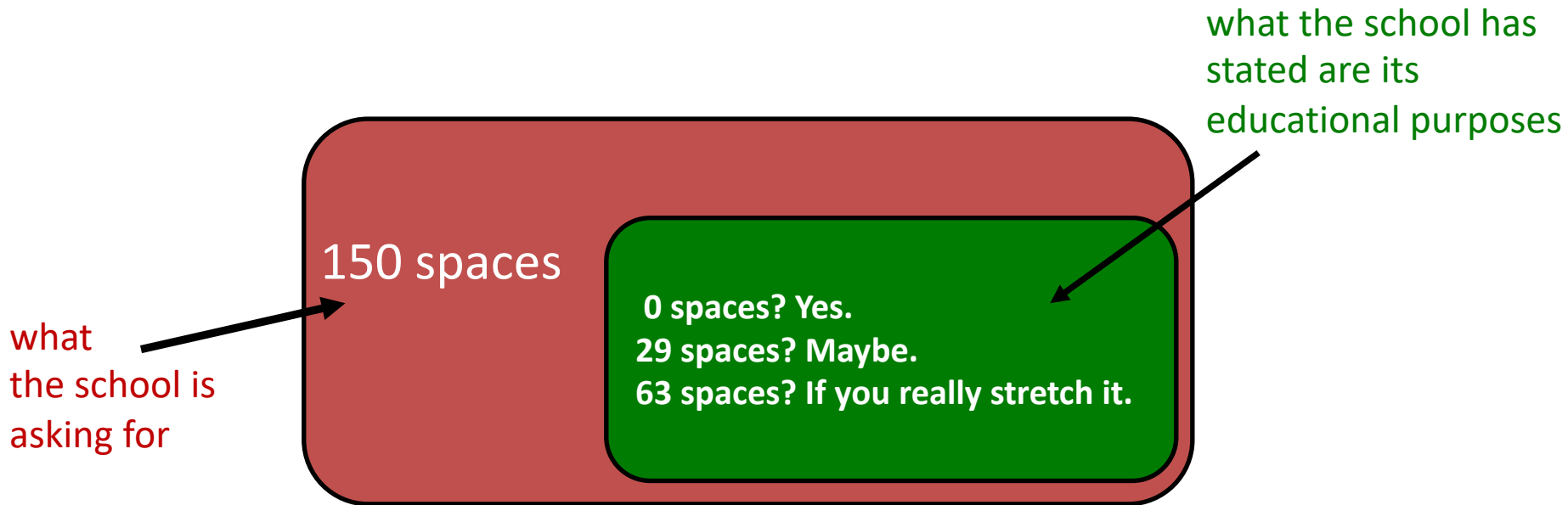
Summary: How many spots are needed?

A. For daily use:

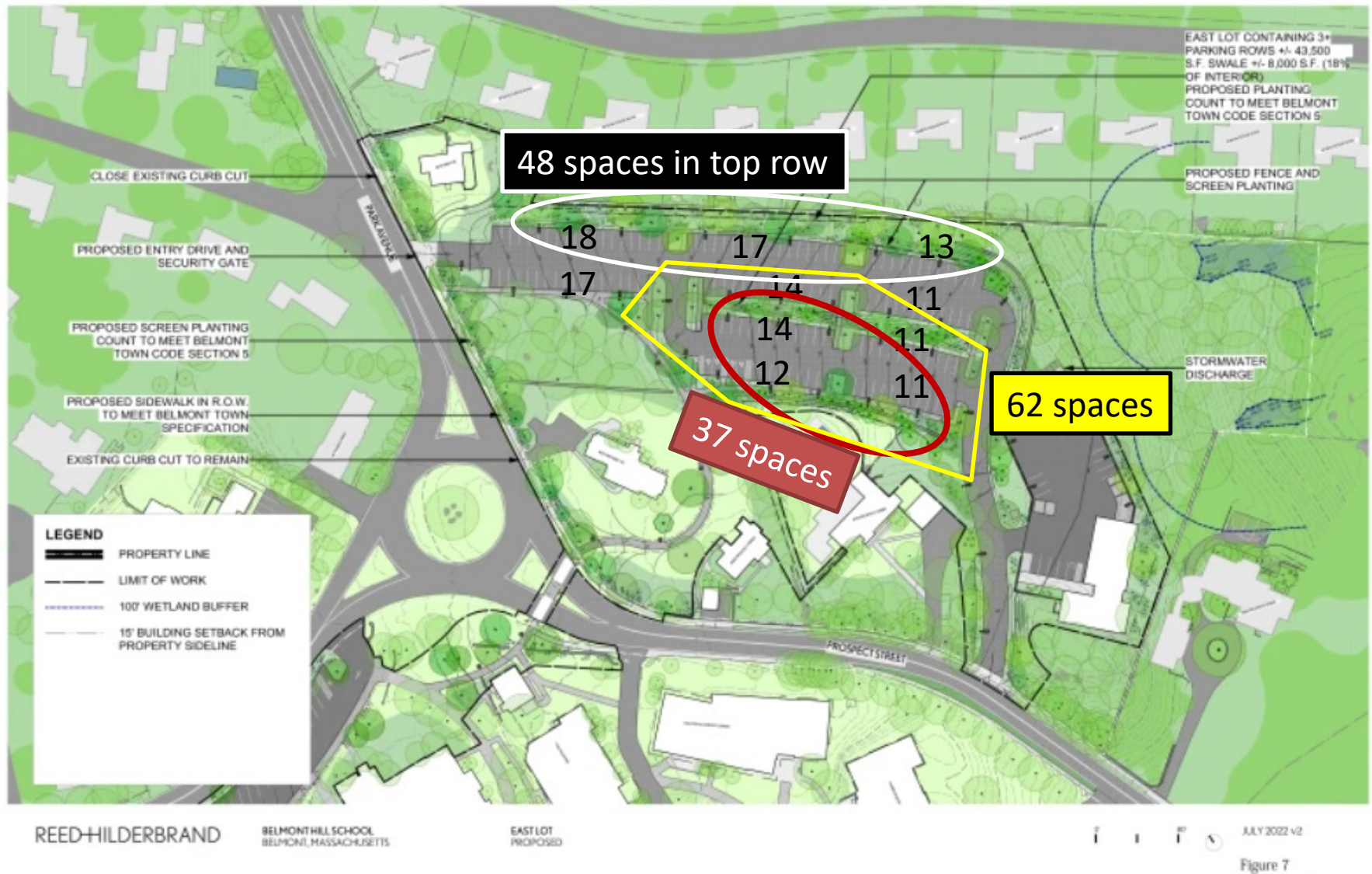
- **At most 29 spots** according to the school

B. For overflow parking

- **At most 63 spots** according to the school
 - includes **full wishlist** with overflow and future use



Could easily eliminate half the lot and still meet their educational needs



~~Revised plan based on neighbor input~~

Do they even use their current lots?

Table 11
PARKING DEMAND OBSERVATIONS – MAY 18, 2021 Belmont Hill School
Traffic Impact Assessment p. 33

Time	Main Lot (158 Spaces)	Upper Lot (35 Spaces)	Alumni House Lot (20 Spaces*)	Science Center Lot (15 Spaces)	Maintenance Lot (28 Spaces*)	Total Spaces Occupied	% Occupancy
7:00 AM	4	13	1	3	22	43	17%
7:30 AM	18	18	3	5	21	65	25%
8:00 AM	61	24	5	11	24	125	49%
8:30 AM	122	26	7	13	24	192	75%
9:00 AM	137	27	9	15	28	216	84%
9:30 AM	142	26	9	15	29	221	86%
10:00 AM	147	28	9	15	27	226	88%
1:00 PM	135	32	10	11	23	211	82%
1:30 PM	122	23	10	9	21	185	72%
2:00 PM	108	28	17	10	16	179	70%
2:30 PM	101	25	18	5	19	168	66%
3:00 PM	76	22	17	5	20	140	55%
3:30 PM	61	14	12	3	17	107	42%
4:00 PM	46	12	11	2	16	87	34%

*Estimated.
Total No. of Spaces = 256.

Satellite lot



- 9 cars with stickers at 10am, 11/9/22
- We have never seen more than 9 in multiple visits
- There are supposed to be 29 students here based on permits
- **School's study found lots at most 88%** occupied, not including mostly empty satellite lot
 - $0.88 \times 277 \text{ permits} = 243 \text{ spots} < 268 = \text{current number of spots}$
 - No net daily need
- Consistent with our observations over the last month
 - see Wes Austin's 12/6 presentation

D. Future use

In proposal

Lot	Existing Condition (2022)	Existing # Spaces	Proposed # Spaces	Change
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Prospect Street: Facilities Lot	N/a	0	10	10
NET INCREASE				150

Net increase is $147=150-3$ if we ignore Arlington lot, as we should

- difference of -3 comes from main lot

Supplemental Information –

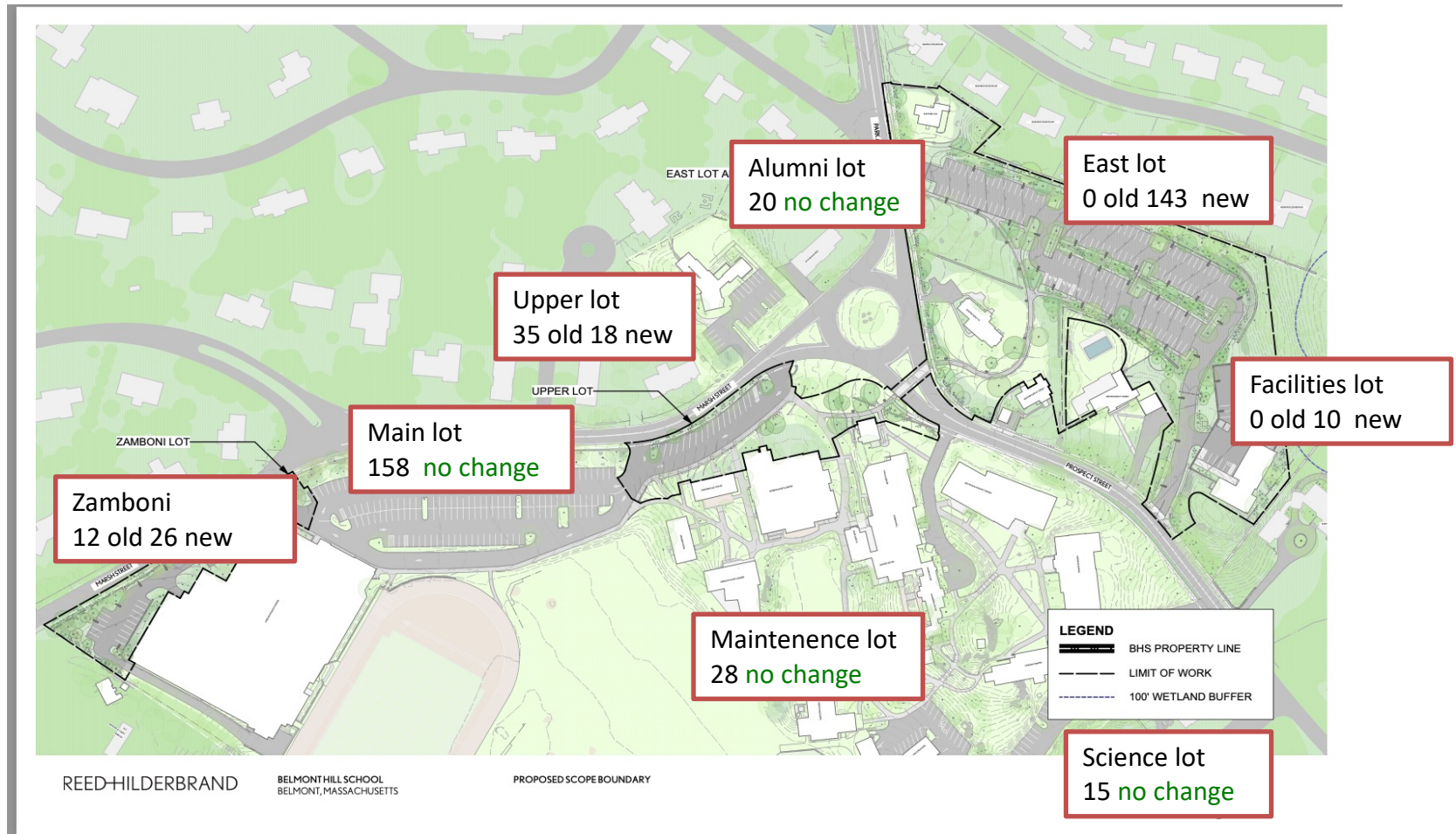
Design and Site Plan Review Belmont Hill School 1.6.2023

Lot	Existing Condition (2022)	Existing # Spaces	Proposed # Spaces	Change
Marsh Street: Zamboni Lot	Unpaved gravel lot. Access from Marsh Street, employees	12	26	14
Marsh Street: Main Lot	Paved, striped lot, frequently overparked students/employees	158	155	-3
Marsh Street: Upper Lot	Employees/visitors	35	18	-17
Science Center	Employees	15	15	0
Facilities/Eliot	Employees	28	28	0
Marsh Street: Alumni	Employees	20	20	0
Off Site (Church) Lot	Students, leased lot, weekdays only, served by shuttle bus or walk	50	0	-50
Park Avenue: East Campus Lot	N/A	0	143	143
Prospect Street: Facilities Lot	N/A	0	10	10
TOTAL AVAILABLE SPACES		318	415	97
Total ON-SITE SPACES (disregard off-site parking)		268	415	147

As we have shared previously, the school expects to submit application for Design and Site Plan Review for a Dining Hall in the future. The Dining Hall project will result in the loss of 43 parking spaces on the main campus; thus the total number of parking spaces on campus will ultimately be 372.

- On-campus maintenance lot is 28 spaces
- 43 is maintenance+science lots – not correct

Parking



New total spaces on campus = 418
Old total spaces = 268
Net increase = 150

After eliminating maintenance lot
Net increase = 390-268 = 122
Maintenance+science, net = 107

Without or with unlisted changes

New total spaces on campus = 418
Old total spaces = 268
Net increase = 150

After eliminating maintenance lot
Net increase = 122
Maintenance and science, net increase = 107

- Daily need is 29
 - Wishlist need is 63
 - Includes 19 visitor
 - Includes 26 future
 - Extra spaces = $150 - 63 = 87$
- Daily need is 29
 - Don't need "future (26)" in wishlist need anymore
 - wishlish need is now $63 - 26 = 37$
 - Extra spaces = $107 - 37 = 70$
 - This is beyond the 43 future and 19 visitor spaces

Lot is still twice as big as they can justify

- If they want us to take into account eliminating more spots, **must be in the proposal**
- **Can't consider future needs but not future impacts**
 - traffic, stormwater, environmental, etc

EXTRA SLIDES

Number of staff spots

Belmont Hill School

Traffic Impact Assessment p. 18

area (i.e., staff, student or visitor). Of note, *the construction of the East Lot and the assignment of staff parking to the lot (approximately 135 vehicles) will result in a reduction in traffic traveling through and circulating within the Park Avenue/Prospect Street/Marsh Street intersection.*

Traffic assessment assumes

- 135 staff parking
 - 277 total parking (staff+students)
 - No increase in number of people coming to campus
-
- If the school claims it needs more parking, then traffic study must take these numbers into account

Regulations on number of accessible spaces

Parking Space Number:

Total Spaces

Required Accessible Spaces

(521 CMR and ADA)

	1-4 (ADA Only)	1 spaces without signage
	5-14 (ADA Only)	1 space
	15-25	1 space
	26-50	2 spaces
	51-75	3 spaces
	76-100	4 spaces
	101-150	5 spaces
	151-200	6 spaces
current	201-300	7 spaces
	301-400	8 spaces
max future	401-500	9 spaces
	501-1000	2% of total
	1001 and Over	20, plus 1 for each 100, or fraction thereof, over 1000

- Matt Lowrie had asked **Belmont Police Chief MacIsaac**. His response was



*Hi Matt [Lowrie],
Really hard to tell because we do not count parked cars
but given the lengths of roadways were cars park and
considering your average vehicle length is 14.7 feet, I
would say certainly well over 100 for the big events and
anywhere for 29 – 75 for an average overflow.
Chief MacIsaac*

MacIsaac also said:

*“Please understand the **majority of complaints we are talking about originated more than ten to fifteen years ago.**”*

“The only reason no parking signs are in place the length of Marsh Street is because we put those signs up when Mitt Romney was Governor. We did not want to make it easy for protestors or others to park on Marsh Street and have easy access to his home.”